

FEAR

Deut. 20: 1 – 4, 8

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Word of God speaks of TWO fears: The right kind of fear and the wrong kind of fear.
 - a. The fear of God is the right kind of FEAR.
 - i. I Pet. 2:17 – *“Fear God”*.
 - ii. Psa. 111:10 – *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”*.
 - iii. Eph. 5:21 – *“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God”*.
 - iv. Phil. 2:12 – *“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”*
 - v. Acts 10: 34 – 35
 - vi. Heb. 12:28
 - vii. The FEAR of God is fear that causes us to shrink from any action which would displease God; the fear which an obedient child has for a loving father; the attitude of respect or reverence.
 - b. The wrong kind of FEAR is: *“The painful emotion marked by alarm, dread, or disquiet. It is anxious concern, fright, terror, timidity, and apprehension.*
 - i. Jesus told His disciples they were not to fear their enemies – Matt. 10:26, 28, 31; Luke 12:4.
 - ii. Paul said, *“And in nothing terrified by your adversaries”* – Phil. 1:28.
 - iii. Jesus said to them in Luke 12:32 – *“Fear not, little flock”*.
 - iv. Paul told Timothy: *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear”* – 2 Tim. 1:7.
 - v. John said, *“there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear:”* – I John 4:18.
 - vi. John said the *“fearful”* will be lost – Rev. 21:8.
2. The wrong kind of FEAR and its effects are seen on every hand:
 - a. It prompts cowardly actions and words from preachers, elders, teachers, mothers, and father – and man in general.
 - b. It produces confused and frantic minds.
 - c. It results in sleepless, restless nights.
 - d. It expresses itself in selfishness, thoughtlessness, and greed.
 - e. It destroys inner unity and peace.
 - f. It shortens lives.

I. AREAS WHERE FEAR AFFECTS OUR LIVES

- a. We fear FAILURE.
 - i. Fear of failure caused the one talent man to do nothing – Matt. 25:25.
 - ii. The fear of failure causes many to never obey the gospel; they are afraid they can't hold out.
 - iii. Our responsibility is according to our abilities – Matt. 25:15; 2 Cor. 8:12.
 - iv. We never fail in God's sight when we do the best we can – I Cor. 15:58; Heb. 6:10.
- b. We fear MEN – John 12: 42 – 43.

- i. People won't obey the gospel because they fear rejection by family and friends.
 - ii. Preachers won't preach all the truth because they fear the elders and congregation.
 - iii. Elders won't stand for all the truth and discipline the ungodly because they fear the congregation.
 - iv. Jesus said we are NOT to fear men – Matt. 10:28.
- c. We fear INSECURITY.
 - i. We fear we won't have food, clothing and shelter.
 - ii. Jesus went to great lengths teaching that children of God should not have such fears – Matt. 6: 24 – 34.
- d. We fear what others WILL SAY or THINK about us.
 - i. Isa. 51:7 – *“Hearken unto men, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.”*
 - ii. Look at what Peter did because of the fear of the people:
 - 1. He denied the Lord – Matt. 26: 69 – 74.
 - 2. He was guilty of hypocrisy – Gal. 2: 11 – 14.
- e. We fear DEATH.
 - i. The faithful Christian should not fear death.
 - ii. Christ died to deliver us from the fear of death – Heb. 2: 14 – 15.
 - iii. Death to the Christian is not a tragic end, but the transition to better things – Phil. 1: 21.
 - iv. Psa. 23:4
- f. We fear OLD AGE.
 - i. The Bible teaches honor is attached to old age – Lev. 19:32; I Tim. 5:1.
 - ii. Many great things can be done in old age.
 - iii. The wisdom of age is needed.

II. THE TRAGIC EFFECTS OF FEAR

- a. FEAR will prevent us from doing the will of God.
 - i. Fear prevented the one talent man from doing anything – Matt. 25: 24 – 31.
 - ii. Fear prevents people from obeying the gospel; they fear they cannot hold out to the end.
 - iii. Fear keeps men and women from developing into teachers.
 - iv. Fear keeps men from making preachers and elders.
 - v. Fear keeps men from leading in prayer.
- b. FEAR makes us useless in the service of God:
 - i. The Lord told Gideon to let the *“fearful and afraid”* depart – (Judges 7:3) – 22,000 departed.
 - ii. There is no place in the kingdom of God for the fearful.
 - iii. We are locked into an ongoing battle with Satan – Eph. 6: 10 – 20; I Pet. 5:8; 2 Cor. 10: 3 -5.
 - 1. It takes courage and not fearing to fight the battle and “pull down the strongholds” of:
 - a. Human wisdom

- b. Hardened hearts
 - c. Denominationalism
 - d. Morality alone
 - e. Humanism (no God).
- c. FEAR spreads and is contagious:
- i. Deut. 20:8 – *“And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, what man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren’s heart faint as well as his heart.”*
 - ii. The ten spies made the people’s heart melt – Josh. 14:8; Num. 13:31.
 - iii. The fear of elders, or one elder, will often permeate the entire eldership and congregation.
- d. FEAR will cause a person to be lost – Rev. 21: 8; Matt. 25: 25, 30.

III. HOW TO CONQUER FEAR

- a. We must remember that God has strictly prohibited FEAR—Heb. 13:5 – 6; Matt. 10:28; 2 Tim. 1:7.
- b. We must put our faith and trust in God.
- i. Heb. 11: 6
 - ii. Isa. 26:3 – *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee”*.
 - iii. We doubt and fear when we have little faith – Matt. 6:30.
 - iv. We must draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to us – James 4:8.
 - v. We must keep our lives free of sin; sin and fear are inseparable—Gen. 3:10; Acts 8:22; I John 1:9.
 - vi. We must fill our hearts with love – I John 4:18.
 - vii. We must pray without ceasing:
 - 1. I Pet. 3:12
 - 2. Eph. 3:20

Conclusion

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